Brief Guide to ESSA Identifications

Wisconsin's Long-Term Goals

School identifications under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are part of a statewide accountability system mandated under Title I, Part A of ESSA. The accountability system, articulated in the Wisconsin Department of Instruction (DPI) ESSA State Plan, is designed to make progress toward three long-term goals:

Academic Achievement Goal: Cut the achievement gap in half for each subgroup within eight years.
- For English Language Arts (ELA), this means a 1% annual increase in grade-level proficiency for the all-students group. Higher annual increases are required for subgroups—ranging from 1.6% for Asian students to 4% for black students.
- For mathematics, it means a 1% annual increase in proficiency rate for the all-students group. Higher annual increases are required for subgroups—ranging from 1.4% for Asian students to 4.2% for black students.

Graduation Rate Goal: Cut the graduation gap in half within eight years.

English Language Proficiency Goal: Achieve an 18% increase in students on track to proficiency within eight years. This translates to a three-point annual increase.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the original six-year timeline for these goals was extended to June 2025.

Identifying Schools for Support and Improvement

Using indicators based on the goals above, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) identifies the schools that need the most help in making progress. In general, the DPI identifies schools based on low graduation rates, low overall performance, and low performance of student groups. The calculations involved in identifications use multiple years of data (wherever possible) to ensure that identifications are meaningful and not overly influenced by year-to-year variability.

By identifying schools for support and improvement, and ensuring they develop and implement improvement plans based on the reasons for their identification, the DPI aims to make sure that Wisconsin's schools make steady progress toward achieving the long-term goals in the ESSA State Plan.

Districts are key to sustained school improvement, and the DPI encourages alignment of improvement efforts at the district and school level. This includes alignment of improvement efforts related to ESSA school-level identifications with any district-level efforts under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The tables below outline the basics of the three types of ESSA identifications, including associated responsibilities for schools, districts, and the DPI. More details are available on the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) Federal Accountability (ESSA) webpage and the Continuous Improvement website.

Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)

Why was my school identified?	Responsibilities	How can my school exit this identification?

School Identification Method
 	
School meets one or more of the following:
 	
- **Low Graduation Rate:** Graduation rate less than or equal to 67%
- **Lowest Performance:** Overall performance score in the bottom 5% of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds
 	
Identifications are normally made every three years.
 	
Schools may have two CSI identifications if they meet both low graduation rate and low performance thresholds.
 	
Schools identified for CSI may also meet criteria for other identifications, but the CSI identification supersedes.
	School Has Primary Responsibility
	At minimum, schools remain identified for two years. A school making satisfactory progress will exit by the end of the fourth year. Grant funding is available each year of identification. Required improvement activities:
	- **Consult and involve stakeholders in all aspects of improvement planning and implementation.** ESSA requires specific stakeholders to be involved.
	- **Complete a comprehensive needs assessment and root cause analysis.** Root causes should be grounded in data and focused on educator practices contributing to the issues that led to identification.
	- **Review resource allocation for inequities, to be addressed in the improvement plan.** This may include review at the LEA level. Inequities should be addressed in the improvement plan.
	- **Develop a comprehensive improvement plan that modifies practices, policies, and/or professional development to address the issues that led to the CSI identification.** This may be a new plan or modified existing plan. Changes can be strategically phased over multiple years for sustainability.
	  ○ The plan must include evidence of the required activities above.
	  ○ The plan must be informed by indicators defined in the ESSA State Plan (e.g., data contained in the ESSA Accountability Report.)[1]
	  ○ The plan must include one or more evidence-based improvement strategy that meet ESSA Tiers of Evidence 1, 2, or 3.[2] Strategies should address identified root cause(s) that are grounded in data and focused on educator practices contributing to the issues that led to identification.
	  ○ To support successful implementation, the plan should include the following:
	    ■ A solid theory of action to reach a strategic goal
	    ■ Action steps, timelines, and responsibilities
	    ■ Adequate professional learning and coaching support
	    ■ Regular collection and analysis of data to monitor implementation and impact
	- **Implement the improvement plan.** This includes collecting educator practice data and student outcome data for analysis and adjusting action steps and future plans accordingly.
	- **Improve outcomes**, meeting Exit Criteria 1 and 2.
	- **Ensure sustainable systems and procedures are in place for continued improvement**, meeting Exit Criteria 3.
	
	District/LEA Has Primary Responsibility
	- Inform schools of identification.
	- Participate on school improvement teams as needed, and track school progress.
	- Review and approve improvement plans prior to submission for DPI approval. Support alignment of plans.
	- Facilitate access to any needed technical assistance, coaching, or other supports.
	- Review resource allocation at the LEA level for inequities and take action to address issues.
	- Manage grants, including application, budgeting, reports, claims, etc.
	- Submit other required documentation.
	
	DPI Has Primary Responsibility
	- Review and approve plans.
	- Monitor plan implementation.
	- Provide funding.
	- Ensure availability of technical assistance and professional development.
	- Assess and report school progress toward meeting exit criteria.
	- Monitor LEAs for CSI responsibilities through review of grant-related documentation.
		If a school has two CSI identifications, it must meet exit requirements for each.
		
		Criterion 1: *The school must not be eligible for identification in the current year.*
		- Low Graduation Rate: The school's average four- and seven-year graduation rate is at least 67 percent, OR (if a seven-year graduation rate is not available) the four-year graduation rate is at least 67 percent.
		- Lowest Performance: The current year's summary score for the all-students group is above the identification threshold for the current year AND above the threshold for the year the school was first identified.
		
		Criterion 2: *The school must make sustained and sustainable improvement toward the statewide long-term goals.*
		- Low Graduation Rate:
		  ○ The school's four-year and seven-year graduation rates both exceed the initial rates that led to the school's identification in both of the most recent two years for which enough data are available, OR
		  ○ The school shows improvement in graduation rates in both of the two most recent intervals.
		- Lowest Performance:
		  ○ The school's performance exceeds the initial performance that led to the school's identification in both of the most recent two years for which enough data are available, OR
		  ○ The school shows improvement in both of the two most recent intervals.
		
		Criterion 3: *The school must demonstrate evidence of systems, structures, and/or procedures that ensure sustained and sustainable high-quality improvement planning and practices are in place.*
		
		DPI consultants determine progress to exit on Exit Criterion 3, based on submitted materials and evidence from monitoring. DPI's Office of Educational Accountability calculates progress to exit for Exit Criteria 1 and 2 and includes it in the school's Progress-to-Exit Report.
		
		More exit details are available in the guidance document "Exiting an ESSA Identification."

Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)

Why was my school identified?	Responsibilities	How can my school exit this identification?
School Identification Method In schools identified for ATSI, one or more of the student groups below are performing in the bottom 5% of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds. Student groups: - Black/African American - Hispanic/Latino - American Indian/Alaska Native - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - Asian - White - Two or More Races - Students with Disabilities - Economically Disadvantaged - English Learners Identifications are normally made every three years. Schools may have multiple ATSI identifications if they meet the thresholds for more than one student group.	**School Has Primary Responsibility** A school making satisfactory progress will exit the identification by the end of the sixth year. If the school does not exit within that time frame, it is identified for CSI. Required improvement activities: **Consult and involve stakeholders in all aspects of improvement planning and implementation.** ESSA requires specific stakeholders to be involved. **Review resource allocation for inequities, to be addressed in the improvement plan.** This may include review at the LEA level. Inequities should be addressed in the improvement plan. **Develop a targeted improvement plan that modifies practices, policies, and/or professional development to address the issues that led to the identification.** This may be a new plan or modified existing plan. Changes can be strategically phased over multiple years for sustainability. - The plan must be informed by indicators defined in the ESSA State Plan (e.g., data contained in the ESSA Accountability Report)[1] and must address each student group for which the school has an identification. - The plan must include one or more evidence-based improvement strategy that meet ESSA Tiers of Evidence 1, 2, or 3.[2] Strategies should address identified root cause(s) that are grounded in data and focused on educator practices contributing to the issues that led to identification. - To support successful implementation, the plan should include the following: - A solid theory of action to reach a strategic goal - Action steps, timelines, and responsibilities - Adequate professional learning and coaching support - Regular collection and analysis of data to monitor implementation and impact **Implement the improvement plan**. This includes collecting educator practice data and student outcome data for analysis and adjusting action steps and future plans accordingly. **Improve outcomes**, meeting Exit Criteria 1 and 2. **Ensure sustainable systems and procedures are in place for continued improvement**, meeting Exit Criterion 3. **District/LEA Has Primary Responsibility** - Inform schools of identification. - Participate on school improvement teams as needed. - Facilitate access to any needed technical assistance, coaching, or other supports. - Review and approve plans. Support alignment of plans. - Monitor plan implementation. - Review resource allocation at the district level for inequities and take action to address issues. - Assess progress toward meeting exit criteria to ensure exit within 6 years. - Report progress-to-exit data on Criterion 3 to DPI as requested. **DPI Has Primary Responsibility** - Ensure availability of technical assistance and professional development. - Monitor LEAs for ATSI responsibilities through ESEA monitoring.	If a school has multiple ATSI identifications, it must meet exit requirements for each student group resulting in an identification. **Criterion 1:** *The school must not be eligible for identification in the current year.* - The student group has a summary score that is above the ATSI identification threshold in both the current year and the year of initial identification. (New thresholds are determined for each identification cycle.) **Criterion 2:** *The school must make sustained and sustainable improvement toward the statewide long-term goals.* - The student group's performance score on each applicable long-term goal either shows improvement in both of the two most recent intervals OR exceeds the identification-year score in both of the most recent two years for which enough data are available. **Criterion 3:** *The school must demonstrate evidence of systems, structures, and/or procedures that ensure sustained and sustainable high-quality improvement planning and practices, targeting the identified subgroup(s), are in place.* Districts determine progress to exit on Exit Criterion 3, based on submitted materials and evidence from monitoring. DPI's Office of Educational Accountability calculates progress to exit for Exit Criteria 1 and 2 and includes it in the school's Progress-to-Exit Report. More exit details are available in the guidance document "Exiting an ESSA Identification."

Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)

Why was my school identified?	Responsibilities	How can my school exit this identification?

School Identification Method
 	
In schools identified for TSI, one or more of the student groups below are performing in the bottom 10% of all students and in the bottom 10% of that subgroup, statewide.
 	
Student groups:
• Black/African American
• Hispanic/Latino
• American Indian/Alaska Native
• Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
• Asian
• White
• Two or More Races
• Students with Disabilities
• Economically Disadvantaged
• English Learners
 	
Identifications are normally made each year.
 	
Schools may have multiple TSI identifications if they meet the thresholds for more than one student group.
	School Has Primary Responsibility
	A school making satisfactory progress will exit the identification within the number of years specified by the LEA (LEA Plan Question 15.2). If it does not, the LEA takes additional action. Required improvement activities:
	• **Consult and involve stakeholders in all aspects of improvement planning and implementation.** ESSA requires specific stakeholders to be involved.
	• **Develop and implement a targeted improvement plan that modifies practices, policies, and/or professional development to address the issues that led to the identification.** This may be a new plan or modified existing plan. Changes can be strategically phased over multiple years for sustainability.
	   ○ The plan must be informed by indicators defined in the ESSA State Plan (e.g., data contained in the ESSA Accountability Report)[1] and must address each student group for which the school has an identification.
	   ○ The plan must include one or more evidence-based improvement strategy (practice, program, or strategy) that meet ESSA Tiers of Evidence 1, 2, or 3.[2] Strategies should address identified root cause(s), which should be grounded in data and focused on educator practices contributing to the issues that led to identification.
	   ○ To support successful implementation, the plan should include the following:
	     ■ A solid theory of action to reach a strategic goal
	     ■ Action steps, timelines, and responsibilities
	     ■ Adequate professional learning and coaching support
	     ■ Regular collection and analysis of data to monitor implementation and impact
	• **Improve outcomes**, no longer meeting criteria for TSI identification.
	Note: More details are outlined in DPI's Continuous Improvement Process Criteria and Rubric.
	
	District/LEA Has Primary Responsibility
	• Inform schools of identification.
	• Participate on school improvement teams as needed.
	• Facilitate access to any needed technical assistance, coaching, or other supports.
	• Review and approve plans. Support alignment of plans.
	• Monitor plan implementation.
	• Assess progress toward exit and take additional action if a school does not exit within the number of years specified by the LEA.
	
	DPI Has Primary Responsibility
	• Ensure availability of technical assistance and professional development.
	• Monitor LEAs for TSI responsibilities through ESEA monitoring.
		Schools exit this identification automatically if they are not re-identified in the following year.
		
		More exit details are available in the guidance document "Exiting an ESSA Identification."

[1] Each school's ESSA Accountability Report, available in SAFE, contains data on applicable indicators related to the statewide long-term goals. More information is available in the *ESSA Accountability Report Guide*.
[2] The tiers-of-evidence requirement is a 1003 funding-related requirement (20 U.S.C. §7801(21)(B)).

Stakeholders (applies to all identification types)

Specific groups that must be included	Additional groups to include, depending on local context
- Teachers, including those for general and special education and English learners - School administrators - Other school staff - Students (if age-appropriate) - Families (must include representatives of specific student groups present in the school)	- Community health organizations - Community-based organizations, including early childhood programs and providers and libraries - Neighborhood representatives, including neighboring and local businesses - Local and relevant environmental organizations - Tribal Government representatives: Tribal Chairs or Presidents (or their designees), Tribal Council representatives, Tribal Education Directors and staff - Government entities, including state agencies, counties, and municipalities - Adjunct school services such as before and after school child care providers and community recreation centers - Relevant institutions of higher education - Workforce investment boards and other job-related agencies - Faith-based communities

(ESSA State Plan, p. 52)